A Catechism

on

Catholic Foreign Missions

Published by

Society for the Propagation of the Faith

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FOREWORD.

This Catechism contains elementary information on Catholic Foreign Missions. It is made up of simple answers to questions put to the compiler upon the occasion of his visits to the various parishes of the Boston Archdiocese in the interests of the Missions. The purpose of the booklet is to win friends for the cause that is dearest to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. May He be praised, loved, adored and glorified by every creature!

Nihil Obstat
PATRICK J. WATERS, PH. D.
Censor Librorum

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CHAPTER I

THE MISSIONARY

What do you mean by a missionary?

A missionary is one specially sent by God to carry the message of the Gospel to those who have not yet received the glad tidings.

How many kinds of missionaries are there?

Two kinds—home and foreign missionaries.

What do you mean by a home missionary?

One who labors to make Christ's teachings known in a Christian country, usually his native land.

What do you mean by a foreign missionary?

One, not a native, who preaches the Gospel in pagan and heathen lands.

What are pagan and heathen lands?

Countries where the majority of the population does not worship the one, true God.

What is the difference between a pagan and a heathen?

A pagan is a worshipper of idols or false gods. A heathen is one who is ignorant of divine revelation.

What part of the world's population is pagan and heathen?

Two-thirds, or one billion souls.

How are these people distributed?

China, 450,000,000; India, 300,000,000; Africa, 200,000,000; Japan, 40,000,000; other countries, 10,000,000.

Are foreign missionaries always priests?

No. Strictly speaking, a missionary is a priest, but the name is also applied to Brothers and Sisters who, as in Christian countries, help the priests and work under their direction.

Are the majority of missionaries priests?

No. They are divided as follows: 15,000 priests, 5,000 Brothers and 45,000 Sisters.

Are foreign missionaries secular priests or members of religious orders?

There are both secular priests and members of religious orders on the missions, but the latter are much more numerous.

To what nationalities do foreign missionaries belong?

They represent every Christian nation.

What nation has supplied the greatest number of foreign missionaries?

France. She has furnished about sixty per cent of them, and has contributed more alms for their support than any other nation.

Does America furnish many foreign missionaries?

Up to the present, her contribution has been very small. But since we now have apostolic schools and seminaries to prepare young people for this life, it is to be hoped our country will do her share.

CHAPTER II

HIS TRAINING AND LIFE

How long is the period of preparation for a missionary?

It depends upon the amount of education one has upon entering the apostolic school or seminary.

Must a missionary be as well trained and educated as a priest at home?

Yes. If possible, he should be better equipped, because there are not the same facilities for study and reference on the missions as at home. Moreover, he requires a special preparation for his work.

In what does this special preparation consist?

In a knowledge of the modern languages, medicine, social science, agriculture and building.

Does a missionary know where he will be sent after he is ordained?

In a general way, he knows he will be sent where the order or college to which he belongs has missions, but he has no definite knowledge as to the field of his life's work.

Do missionaries ever return to their homes?

Yes, sometimes for reasons of health or to collect alms, but as a rule they do not. There are many missionaries who have been thirty and forty years at their posts without once returning home.

Is it true that missionaries do not live long?

No. While the life is hard and offers few material comforts, the average length of a missionary's life is

no shorter than that of his brother priest at home. In certain mission districts, however, owing to climatic conditions, the death rate is very high.

Why is the life of a missionary considered hard?

Because of the many privations, hardships and difficulties of dealing with the natives.

What are some of the privations?

Isolation, separation from one's relatives, friends and country; abandonment of many of the manners and customs of one's native land.

Do missionaries ever become accustomed to these privations?

Yes. This is one of the special graces of their vocation.

Are missionaries really happy?

Yes. Among them are to be found some of the happiest men and women in the world.

How can this be possible?

They are happy in the knowledge that they are carrying out the command of Christ—"Go, teach all nations."

Do missionaries live like the natives among whom they work?

Yes, to a great extent, as this brings them in closer touch with the people.

Does a missionary ever live alone?

A missionary Sister never lives alone. Two or three Sisters are always found together even in the very small stations. Missionary priests, especially members of religious orders, are never found alone unless, owing to the scarcity of priests, it is impossible to make this arrangement.

Do missionaries travel much?

Yes, they find it very necessary in caring for their extensive districts. In many places, it takes most of their time to visit the different stations under their charge. They are often away from the central station months at a time.

CHAPTER III

HIS WORK OFTEN REPULSIVE

Do missionaries penetrate into the interior of pagan lands?

Yes, they are to be found living in the midst of wild and savage tribes, far removed from civilization.

Are many missions established among savage tribes?

Yes, a great number.

Where are some of these?

In various sections of Africa, India, Oceania and the Philippines.

To what extent are these people savage?

They hunt heads, and eat human flesh. Bishop Bertreux, of the Solomon Islands, tells of a native chief, who proudly boasts that he has killed, roasted and eaten six hundred human beings.

Do missionaries ever succeed in converting cannibals?

Yes, and when a chief is converted, all his subjects usually follow his example.

Are many missions established among the lepers?

Yes, they are particularly numerous in tropical climes, like Africa, India, Southern China and the Islands of the Pacific.

How large are these leper asylums?

They have from a hundred to three thousand inmates.

Is not the work of caring for the lepers very repulsive?

Yes, it is the most disagreeable work that the missions offer, but through it souls are saved, and this is sufficient reason for both priests and Sisters to perform the most loathsome tasks.

Do not the missionaries who engage in the work of caring for the lepers receive a special grace from God?

It would seem so, from the fact that there are to be found in this work priests and Sisters, who having been brought up in homes of culture, refinement and even luxury, cheerfully devote their lives to these most abandoned of God's creatures.

CHAPTER IV
HIS MEANS OF SUPPORT

A. The Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

1. ORGANIZATION.

How are missionaries supported?

The greater part of their support comes from the two great Mission Aid Organizations—the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and the Association of the Holy Childhood.

Give a brief history of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

It was established in 1822, by a pious French woman, Pauline Jaricot, in order to assist Bishop Dubourg, of New Orleans, La., and the modest receipts (four thousand dollars) of the first year, were so multiplied that, during 1913, the Society dispersed over a million and a half dollars throughout the pagan and heathen world.

How is the Society for the Propagation of the Faith organized?

In each diocese where the Society is established, a Diocesan Director is appointed by the Bishop. By sermons and illustrated lectures, he interests the faithful in mission work, and, after his visit to a parish, a Parochial or Local Director is assigned under whose immediate supervision the work is carried on. The latter holds monthly meetings for the collectors, and any others who may wish to attend, and sends the returns to the Diocesan Office.

What is a Diocesan Office?

An office where a Diocesan Director and his assistants labor in the interest of the missions. Here they meet all those who wish to inquire about the work or make offerings, and answer the correspondence. An Exhibition Hall is attached, containing curios from all parts of the mission field.

How does one become affiliated with the Society for the Propagation of the Faith?

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith has three kinds of membership—Ordinary, Special and Perpetual.

What do you mean by an Ordinary Member?

One who makes a monthly offering of five cents and recites daily an Our Father, Hail Mary and the invocation, "Saint Francis Xavier, pray for us."

To whom does one pay this monthly offering?

If the Society exists in his parish, he pays his ordinary membership to a Promoter; if there is no branch of the Society in his parish, he sends it to the Diocesan Office.

What do you mean by a Promoter?

One who collects the monthly dues, five cents, of ten Ordinary Members. A year's dues, sixty cents, may be paid at once.

To whom do Promoters make returns?

If the Society is organized in the parish, to the priest in charge; if not, to the Diocesan Director; in case there is no Diocesan Director, to the National Director, in New York.

Are the members assigned to Promoters?

No, they secure their own members.

How does one become a Special Member?

By making an offering of fifty cents a month or six dollars a year, and reciting daily the above prayers. A Special Member is entitled to enroll nine others besides himself.

What do you mean by a Perpetual Member?

One who contributes in one payment (or installments during the period of one year) the sum of forty dollars, and recites the above prayers.

What is the advantage of becoming a Perpetual Member?

The principal advantage is that the Perpetual Member shares in the spiritual benefits of the Society from the time the first payment is made as long as there is a priest in the mission field.

Another advantage is that he himself makes provision for his soul instead of leaving this important matter to others, who may fail to attend to it.

To whom do Special and Perpetual Members make their offerings?

They may make them either to the Parochial or to the Diocesan Director.

May deceased persons be enrolled?

Certainly, in any of the three classes.

2. SPIRITUAL ADVANTAGES.

What are the spiritual benefits for the members of this Society?

A share in the conversions, prayers and other good works of the 65,000 Catholic foreign missionaries in the field; a share in 15,000 Masses offered yearly by missionary priests; and a great number of indulgences, both plenary and partial.

Is this not a large number of Masses to promise annually?

Yes, but without doubt the actual number exceeds 15,000. Each of the 15,000 priests depending upon the

Society for his maintenance is obliged to say one Mass annually for the members of the Society, but it is likely that he gives them a memento in every Mass he offers. Hence, we may suppose with good reason that all members share in over three hundred times 15,000 Masses.

On what days may the plenary indulgences be gained?

May 3, the Feast of the Finding of the Holy Cross (the day on which the Society was established); December 3, the Feast of St. Francis Xavier, Patron of the Society; March 25, the Feast of the Annunciation; August 15, the Feast of the Assumption; or any day within the Octaves of these Feasts; January 6, the Feast of the Epiphany; September 29, the Feast of St. Michael; all Feasts of the Apostles; at the hour of death, by invoking the Sacred Name of Jesus.

The above are the principal days for gaining plenary indulgences.

When may partial indulgences be gained?

An indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines each time a member performs, in aid of the Society, any work of devotion or charity; one of 300 days whenever a member recites an Our Father and Hail Mary, together with the invocation, "Saint Francis Xavier, pray for us."

All indulgences are applicable to the Suffering Souls.

Do Ordinary and Special Members enjoy the same spiritual advantages as Perpetual Members?

Yes, the advantages are the same, the only difference being the length of time during which they are enjoyed.

3. DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS.

How much has the Society distributed to the missions since its foundation?

Eighty-three millions of dollars.

How is this distribution made?

The members of the Central Council at Lyons and Paris determine from the reports of the Bishops, Vicars Apostolic and Prefects Apostolic how much should be sent to each missionary district and these allowances are remitted semi-annually, or annually.

Where is this money sent?

Most of it is sent to heathen and pagan lands, such as China, Japan, India, Africa, Oceania, etc.

How much is sent to the United States?

Very little now, but there is hardly a part of this country which the Society has not assisted. As early as 1829, New York, Philadelphia and Boston received help.

How much have we actually received from the Society?

Since its establishment, the Society has contributed to the now flourishing dioceses in the United States over six millions of dollars.

How much have we given in return?

The United States has given to the Society during this period about three millions of dollars. Of course, our indebtedness is now being rapidly cancelled by the generous contributions coming annually from our country.

When was the Society introduced into the United States?

It was introduced in 1840, but only since 1898 have special efforts been made to induce Americans to join this noble crusade.

What do you mean by special efforts?

The opening of a Diocesan Office and the appointment of a Diocesan Director, whose sole duty is to labor in the interest of Foreign Missions.

Which was the first diocese in the United States to establish the Society in this way?

The Archdiocese of Boston, in 1898. New York followed in 1904, Philadelphia in 1913, and Albany in 1916.

Do all Diocesan Directors give their entire time to the work of the missions?

No, only those of Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Albany.

B. Association of the Holy Childhood.

1. MEMBERSHIP AND SPIRITUAL BENEFITS.

What is the Association of the Holy Childhood?

A society similar to that of the Propagation of the Faith, whose membership consists principally of children and whose purpose is to save and educate pagan and heathen children.

When and by whom was it founded?

In 1843, about twenty years after the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, by Bishop Janson of Nancy, France.

How is the Association of the Holy Childhood organized?

Since this Society is chiefly for children, the teachers of the Parochial and Sunday Schools direct the work. They collect the dues, and in every way possible try to stimulate the children to take an active interest in the work of the Association.

The money thus collected is remitted monthly to the Diocesan Director.

What is the membership fee in this Association?

Ordinary members pay one cent a month, or twelve cents a year.

Are there other kinds of members?

Yes, Perpetual Members, as in the Propagation of the Faith.

How much does a Perpetual Member contribute?

Twenty dollars once.

Are there any special prayers to be said?

If the child enrolled is old enough, he or she should say one Hail Mary and the invocation, "Holy Virgin Mary, pray for us and for poor pagan children."

What are the spiritual benefits to be gained from membership in this Association?

In general, the same as those of the Propagation of the Faith Society—a share in the good works of all the missionaries aided by the Association; a share in the Masses offered by missionary priests; and many indulgences.

When may these indulgences be gained?

Plenary indulgences may be gained on the feasts of the Patron Saints of the Association—the Presentation of Mary, the feasts of St. Joseph, the Holy Angels, St. Francis Xavier and St. Vincent de Paul.

There are also many Partial Indulgences.

What are the conditions for gaining these Plenary Indulgences?

For adult members (those who are also members of the Propagation of the Faith) the usual conditions of confession, Communion and prayers for the Holy Father's intentions; children, who have not made their First Communion, need only pray for the Holy Father's intentions.

2. RESCUING HEATHEN CHILDREN.

Is there any other way of helping the missions through this Association besides the payment of membership dues?

A most popular way is to contribute five dollars to "buy" a heathen child, the donor having the privilege of choosing the name given the child in Baptism.

Why are pagan children so much in need of help?

In many mission countries, the life of an infant, especially a female, is considered of little value, hence countless parents abandon or destroy their offspring, either because they have no love for them or because they are so poor that they have no means of supporting them.

How do they destroy them?

The means used are not only barbarous but inhuman and unnatural. The usual way is by drowning, but many infants are smothered, buried alive or thrown to dogs and pigs who speedily devour them, as is the case in China, Japan, India, and Africa.

How do missionaries save these infants?

They purchase them for a very small amount, sometimes as small as ten cents, and then bring them up as Christians in their various charitable institutions.

About how many of these institutions are supported by the Holy Childhood?

Orphanages, 1,500; schools, 12,000; workshops, 5,000.

How many children are thus saved and educated annually?

About 600,000.

How many little ones has the Association sent directly to heaven?

Twenty million. One Sister in China with the aid of her assistants baptized 3,000 dying infants during 1913.

Are the missionaries always able to purchase the infants offered them?

No, they very often have to refuse them, because they cannot afford to pay even the small price asked, or, more frequently, because they have not the means to support them.

What becomes of the waifs who are admitted into the orphanages?

About ninety per cent die from previous lack of care, exposure, etc. The ten per cent that live are well instrueted in the Faith, taught to be self-supporting, and when they beeome of age, are married to Christians.

What becomes of the blind and deformed?

They are kept by the Sisters, who provide for their support often during their entire lifetime.

Have the orphanages many inmates?

Yes, some contain over a thousand children.

How are the very young infants cared for?

Nurses take charge of the youngest infants at their own homes and report monthly to the Sisters, from whom they receive six dollars a year for their services.

How much does it cost to support a child at an orphanage?

A few cents a day, just enough to pay for a small portion of rice.

Have these two Societies any official organs?

Yes. Each prints a very interesting bi-monthly magazine called the "Annals."

C. *Appeals and Gifts.*

Besides the Propagation of the Faith and the Holy Childhood, are there any other means of support for the missionaries?

Catholie newspapers and magazines make appeals in their behalf; some receive aid from relatives and friends; occasionally, a missionary returns to Christian countries in order to collect funds for his special district.

Is the majority of missionaries helped by such means?

No. Naturally, only those who can make eloquent appeals, or have generous friends, receive assistance through these methods.

What advantage over these methods has that used by the Propagation of the Faith and the Holy Childhood?

A more even distribution of funds is made and more missionaries are assisted. For these reasons, it is far better to send aid to the missionaries through these Societies.

But when one sends money through these Societies, has he the right to determine where it goes and for what it is used?

If the money represents membership of any kind, no; if it is a gift, the donor may specify the purpose and the recipient.

Of what do "gifts" to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and the Holy Childhood consist?

Donations of money (any amount, according to one's means) for the erection of chapels, hospitals, etc., or for the education of seminarians; chalices, monstrances and other sacred vessels or any of the various requisites for the altar—in fact, anything that will be useful to the missionaries.

Are sacred vessels, such as chalices, ciboria, monstrances, expensive?

No. A good, serviceable chalice or ciborium bearing the initials of the donor may be purchased for fifteen or twenty dollars. One Diocesan Office sent over five hundred chalices to the missions during the last three years. They are very acceptable gifts, for the missionaries are often obliged to use vessels that are not fit for the celebration of Holy Mass.

A good monstrance costs thirty-two dollars.

How much does a mission chapel cost?

From $500 to $2,000. There are a great many of these chapels in the mission field erected by benefactors in memory of departed relatives and friends. As a rule, the chapel is dedicated to the patron saint of the donor; he receives a copy of the plans, a photo of the building when completed and a grateful letter of acknowledgment from the missionary in charge, with the assurance of his prayers and those of his flock at every Mass celebrated in the chapel.

What would it cost to establish an entire mission station—chapel, rectory, school and convent?

It would be possible to erect a modest one for $2,000, and God alone can measure the merit attained by one making such a generous offering as this.

What class of people contribute most to the mission cause?

The poor. The wealthy give very little; those in moderate circumstances are generous; but the bulk of both Societies comes from poor men, women and

children, who appreciate the Faith so much that they are willing to make incredible sacrifices in order to share it with others.

Mention some of the sacrifices made by the poor.

They deny themselves delicacies at table, clothes, amusements, vacations, etc.; they often walk to and from their work in order to save carfare; after a hard day's work they visit their friends and acquaintances to interest them in the cause; they contribute in many cases a certain per cent of their wages.

What is the greatest stimulus to mission work in Catholic communities?

Undoubtedly, the practical sympathy of bishops and priests in Christian countries determines the success or failure of the mission aid organizations, for the faithful need but to be told of conditions in the mission field in order to give of their time and money to help the cause.

When these Societies are established in a parish, do all the parishioners join them?

No, but if the matter is kept constantly before them, most of the faithful will become members, as experience has proved.

CHAPTER V

NATIVE PRIESTS AND SISTERS.

How has the European War affected the missions?

Many missionaries have been recalled to fight for their respective countries; all help from Catholic Europe, which was the main support of the missions, has been cut off; food stuffs and building materials have increased in price; the European mission seminaries have been either depleted or closed entirely hence there will be a great scarcity of missionaries.

Will the war affect the future of the missions?

Yes, because no new mission fields can be opened and there will be no young missionaries (European) to take the places of those who die at the front.

Is there no way to remedy the situation?

Yes, by establishing more native seminaries.

Are there not already many native seminaries?

Yes, but the number is not sufficient to supply the demand for native priests.

Are there many vocations among the natives in mission countries?

Yes, the number is very large, but the missionary bishops and priests lack the means of educating the young men and women, who aspire to the priesthood and the religious life.

Do the natives make good missionaries?

They not only make good missionaries, but in some respects they can accomplish more than foreign missionary priests and Sisters.

What is the reason for this?

Native missionaries understand the language, customs and dispositions of their countrymen far better than foreign missionaries; they can accommodate themselves more easily to the mode of life, especially of the poorer classes.

What does it cost to educate a native seminarian?

At present, fifty dollars a year is sufficient, or three hundred dollars for the entire course—two years of philosophy and four of theology.

Can we help to spread the Faith in any better way than by educating native seminarians?

No, for it is impossible to estimate the amount of good that even one priest can accomplish among his pagan countrymen. Every Catholic, who can possibly afford it, should be instrumental in placing one of these native priests at God's altar in thanksgiving for the gift of the Faith.

How many native Priests and Sisters are there in these pagan and heathen lands?

China has about 800 native priests and 1,500 Sisters. India has double that number both of native priests and Sisters.

CHAPTER VI

OUR DUTY

Is it possible for the National Office or the Diocesan Offices to respond to all the appeals received from missionaries?

No, not more than ten per cent of them can be answered owing to the lack of funds at the disposal of those who make the distribution.

How much money do the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and the Association of the Holy Childhood send to the missions each year?

During 1913, the former sent $1,500,000, and the latter, $800,000. Owing to the present unsettled condition of Europe these Societies have issued no general reports for 1914 or 1915.

How does this compare with the amount distributed by non-Catholic mission aid organizations?

The comparison is not complimentary to us. During 1913, the combined receipts of the non-Catholic mission aid organizations was $30,000,000. Of this sum the United States gave $15,000,000. For 1915 these figures are $36,000,000 and $18,000,000, respectively.

What did the United States contribute to the two Societies during 1913?

To the Society for the Propagation of the Faith we gave $440,000; to the Holy Childhood, $27,000. During 1915, to the former we contributed $500,000; to the latter, $56,000.

Why do non-Catholics contribute more than Catholics to the missions?

Non-Catholics, as a rule, are more wealthy than Catholics. It is not an uncommon occurrence for non-Catholic mission boards to receive bequests of thousands of dollars. This is the exception for Catholic mission aid societies.

Non-Catholics have fewer home obligations, for example, they have no schools to support.

Has Catholic America as deep an interest in the work of the Foreign Missions as Catholic Europe?

No, because, up to the present time, she has been engaged in building her own churches, schools, etc. Even to-day many of these institutions have heavy debts. Moreover, Catholic Missions and their needs are not so well known here as abroad.

Is practical sympathy for the mission cause increasing in our country?

Yes, and the prospect for the future is bright. May God speed the day when every diocese shall promote

the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and the Holy Childhood as the three great Archdioceses of the East, and the Diocese of Albany are doing!

Are we in duty bound to support the missions?

Yes. Christ commanded the Apostles and their successors to preach the Gospel to every creature throughout the entire world, and they cannot do this without material assistance. This the faithful must supply. It is their part in the great work of winning the pagan and heathen world to Christ, for it is Our Lord's wish that in this work every Catholic—man, woman and child—should co-operate.

Should we not wait until our own needs are satisfied before furnishing aid to foreign missions?

If we wait until all our needs are satisfied, we shall never help the missions. Had the French Catholics, who assisted us when we were in need, argued thus, we should never have received the six million dollars sent us by the Propagation of the Faith Society. In fact, it was to help us that the Society was first established. If the missionaries had not come to our country in the days of the Church's infancy, many of our grandparents and parents would have died without the sacraments, and we might never have been brought up in the Faith.

What is the strongest motive prompting us to help the missions?

It is undoubtedly the desire to share with others the priceless gift that we ourselves have received from on high—the Catholic Faith. We should be grateful to God for having called us into the true fold, and if by lending our support to the noble cause of the missions, we are responsible for the salvation of others, God will bless a hundred-fold not only ourselves but our homes, our diocese and our country. Let us always keep in mind the words of Sacred Scripture: "He who converteth a brother from the error of his ways, will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins."

At the Diocesan Headquarters of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and the Association of the Holy Childhood on Granby Street, visitors are welcome daily from 8.30 to 5, Saturdays from 8.30 to 1 and evenings by appointment. Telephone Back Bay 5028. Take any Commonwealth Ave. car except the one marked "Limited."

Persons who desire information about the Catholic Foreign Missions or wish to help the cause may address

REV. JOSEPH F. McGLINCHEY, D.D.,
25 Granby St., Boston, Mass.

Society for the Propagation of the Faith,

25 Granby St., Boston, Mass.